

# Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM)

## Annual Report

**Summer Semester 2017 – Spring Semester 2018**

Prepared by

Dr. Enrico Bonello, COAM Faculty Chair, 2017-18

Dr. Jay Hobgood, COAM Coordinator

The University's *Code of Student Conduct* defines academic misconduct as "any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university, or subvert the educational process" (Faculty Rule 3335-23-04[A]). The Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) is charged with maintaining the University's academic integrity by investigating and adjudicating "all reported cases of student academic misconduct, with the exception of cases in a professional college having a published honor code." In instances where a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, COAM decides upon "suitable disciplinary action" (University Rule 3335-5-487[B]). The data for this year's annual report consist of cases resolved from May 7, 2017, to May 6, 2018 and the report follows the templates for reporting developed by previous COAM chairs and coordinators. It should be noted that the 2012-13 reporting year was shorter in comparison with previous years because of calendar changes associated with OSU's conversion to semesters. Links to previous annual reports can be found on the Senate website [http://senate.osu.edu/?page\\_id=183](http://senate.osu.edu/?page_id=183) or at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coamreports.html>.

COAM is composed of 22 faculty members, nine graduate students (appointed by CGS), and nine undergraduate students (appointed by USG). The work of COAM is facilitated by the Coordinator who (1) receives and processes allegations of academic misconduct, (2) notifies students of allegations of academic misconduct, (3) consults with students and faculty regarding allegations of academic misconduct, (4) schedules hearings to resolve allegations of academic misconduct, and (5) notifies students and faculty of the outcomes of these hearings.

Every student who is charged with academic misconduct has the right to a hearing before a panel of COAM. A panel consists of at least four members of COAM, and the rules require that each panel have at least two faculty representatives and one student representative. The panel serves as an impartial hearing body that hears evidence and determines (1) if a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, and (2) an appropriate sanction in cases where a student is found "in violation." If a student agrees with the allegations of academic

misconduct and waives his/her right to a hearing, he/she may have the allegations resolved as an administrative decision. For an administrative decision, a member of COAM, typically the Coordinator, serves as a hearing officer and determines appropriate sanctions.

## I. SUMMARY OF CASES RESOLVED

During the 2017-2018 academic year, COAM resolved 906 cases of alleged academic misconduct. Of the cases resolved, 65.4% were resolved as administrative decisions and 34.6% were resolved as panel hearings (**Table 1**). Females and males represented 43.3% and 56.7, respectively, of the cases resolved (**Table 2**).

**Table 1**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Method of Resolution**  
**2017-2018 Academic Year**

Method of Resolution	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Administrative Decisions	593	65.4
Panel Hearings	313	34.6
Totals	<b>906</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Student's Gender**  
**2017-2018 Academic Year**

Gender	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Female	392	43.3
Male	514	56.7
Totals	<b>906</b>	<b>100</b>

Of the cases resolved by COAM this past reporting year, 839<sup>1</sup> (92.6%) resulted in verdicts of “in violation.” The rates at which males and females were found “in violation” of the *Code of Student Conduct* were 90.6% for females and 94.2% for males (**Table 3**).

---

<sup>1</sup> Total verdicts adjusted after appeals, as noted in Section VI of this report.

**Table 3**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Distribution of Cases by Verdict and Gender**  
**2017-2018 Academic Year**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Students Found “Not In Violation”</b>	<b>Students Found “In Violation”</b>	<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>% In Violation (% of Total for Gender)</b>
Female	37	355	392	90.6
Male	30	484	514	94.2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>---</b>

## **II. SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CHARGES**

When allegations of academic misconduct arise, a student often does not know or understand what he/she has allegedly done wrong. Since COAM desires that the hearing process be an educational process, the Coordinator meets with students charged with violating the Code of Student Conduct and explains the nature of the behavior that led to the allegations. Table 4 summarizes information on academic misconduct charges for the 2017-2018 academic year. The left column is a list of the types of charges used most commonly by COAM. The “Number of Charges” column lists the total number of charges assigned by COAM for each particular violation, and the “% of Total Charges” column lists the number of charges as a percentage of the total charges (2096). The last two columns list the number of findings of “in violation” associated with each charge and the respective percentage for each. For example, of 207 charges of plagiarism, 201 (97.1%) were found “in violation.”

Students are often charged with and found “in violation” of more than one charge. Thus, the total number of charges (2096) exceeds the total number of cases resolved by COAM (906), and the total for “Number In Violation” (1849) exceeds the actual number of *students* found “in violation” (839).

The relatively lower values for the percentages of students found “in violation” of unauthorized collaboration and copying are potentially misleading. They result because COAM often treats the charges of “copying” and “unauthorized collaboration” as mutually exclusive. In many of the cases where COAM receives information alleging that one student may have copied the work of another student, it is not clear which student (if any) copied and whether or not there was collusion (working together in an unauthorized manner). Thus, in many of these cases, the students involved are charged with both copying *and* unauthorized collaboration, but may be found “in violation” of only one of those charges. In other words, copying is considered to be a unilateral act, where one student copies from another, whereas unauthorized collaboration involves two students working together.

“Failure to comply with course/program policies/guidelines” generally accompanies the other more specific charges, and so a student who is found in violation on a specific charge may also be found—by entailment—in violation of course policy. In the majority of COAM cases, charges against students stem from the failure to follow course or assignment guidelines, and this charge may be used by itself alone if the allegations stem directly from a failure to follow course guidelines.

COAM’s list of standard charges was updated in 2013-14 to better correspond to the examples listed in the revised Code of Student Conduct. The following charges were added to COAM’s standard charges in 2013-14: (1) “Knowingly providing or receiving information during examinations such as course examinations and candidacy examinations; or the possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during those examinations”, and (2) “Compromising the academic integrity of the university/subverting the educational process”, which refers to rule 3335-23-04 A of the Code of Student Conduct. It should be noted that alleged violations related to examinations might also be covered by other charges such as copying or unauthorized collaboration/ unauthorized assistance and thus the number of cases associated with this charge likely underestimates the number of incidents that occur during exams or other assessments. The latter charge is generally qualified with a specific description of the alleged misconduct when it falls outside of the most frequent charges or when the standard charges do not adequately capture the nature of the alleged misconduct.

**Table 4**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Summary of Academic Misconduct Charges by Type and Verdict**  
**2017-2018 Academic Year**

<b>Charge</b>	<b>Number of Charges</b>	<b>% of Total Charges</b>	<b>Number in Violation</b>	<b>% in Violation</b>
Violation of course rules or assignment guidelines as contained in the course syllabus or other information provided to the student	808	38.5	757	93.7
Submitting plagiarized work for an academic requirement	207	9.9	201	97.1
Unauthorized collaboration by sharing information during an academic activity/unauthorized sharing of electronic files	320	15.3	273	85.3
Copying the work of another and representing it as one's own work	301	14.4	222	73.8
Knowingly requesting, receiving or providing unauthorized assistance during an academic activity	14	0.7	13	92.9

Possession or use of unauthorized materials during an academic activity	35	1.7	26	74.3
Compromising the academic integrity of the university/subverting the educational process + “other”	58	2.8	55	94.8
Falsification, fabrication or dishonesty in creating or reporting laboratory results, research reports, and/or any other assignments	13	0.6	12	92.3
Knowingly providing or receiving information during examinations such as course examinations and candidacy examinations; or the possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during those examinations.	144	6.9	119	82.6
Engaging in activities that unfairly place other students at an academic disadvantage.	89	4.2	85	95.5
Alteration and resubmission of course materials, grades, or marks in an attempt to change the earned credit or grade	11	0.5	7	63.6
Forgery	15	0.7	15	100.0
Providing falsified materials, documents, or records to a university official in order to meet academic qualifications, criteria, or requirements	10	0.5	10	100.0
Serving as or enlisting the assistance of a substitute for a student during an academic activity	7	0.3	7	100.0
Submission of work not performed in a course or degree program/ Submitting substantially the same work to satisfy requirements for one course or academic requirement that has been submitted in satisfaction of requirements for another course or academic requirement without permission.	62	3.0	61	98.4
Violation of program regulations or policies as established by departmental committees and made available to students.	2	0.1	1	50.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2096</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1849</b>	<b>--</b>

### III. SUMMARY OF CASES BASED ON STUDENT'S ENROLLMENT UNIT AND THE INITIATING UNIT

Eighteen enrollment units on campus were represented in the cases resolved by COAM during the 2017-18 reporting year, with combined cases from the College of the Arts and Sciences (UASC), College of Engineering (UENG), and the College of Business (UBUS) accounting for 71.5% of the total cases (**Table 5**). It should be noted that although the Graduate School is listed as the enrollment units for 29 cases, those students were in graduate programs offered by other academic departments and/or colleges.

The cases heard by COAM during the past year were *initiated* from or involved courses from 79 units across the University, with the combined cases from courses in Chemistry (272 cases), Computer Science and Engineering (89), Business Administration: Marketing and Logistics (85) Anthropology (35), and English (26) accounting for 56.0% of the total cases (**Table 6**).

**Table 5**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Distribution of Cases Based on Student's Enrollment Unit**  
**2017-2018 Academic Year**

<b>Enrollment Unit</b>	<b>Total for Enrollment Unit</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
UASC (College of the Arts and Sciences)	312	34.44%
UENG (College of Engineering)	193	21.30%
UBUS (College of Business)	143	15.78%
UEXP (Exploration Program)	86	9.49%
UEHE (Education and Human Ecology)	37	4.08%
GRD (Graduate School)	29	3.20%
UHRS (School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences) + UHRSP (Pre-program)	29	3.20%
UAGR (College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences)	16	1.77%
UPHR (College of Pharmacy)	12	1.32%
UENR (School of Environment and Natural Resources)	11	1.21%
UNUR (College of Nursing) + UNURP (Nursing Pre-program)	10	1.10%
USWK (College of Social Work)	6	0.66%
UACD (Academy)	5	0.55%
UAHR (School of Architecture)	5	0.55%
UNDG (Undergraduate Non-Degree)	4	0.44%
UPBH (College of Public Health)	4	0.44%
UATI (Agricultural Technical Institute)	2	0.22%
UJGS (John Glenn College of Public Affairs)	2	0.22%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit**  
**2017-2018 Academic Year**

<b>Course Offering Unit</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
CHEM [Chemistry and Biochemistry]	272	30.02%
CSE [Computer Science and Engineering]	89	9.82%
BUS-ML [Business Administration: Marketing and Logistics]	85	9.38%
ANTHROP [Anthropology]	35	3.86%
ENGLISH	26	2.87%
BIOLOGY	25	2.76%
MECH ENG [Mechanical Engineering]	23	2.54%
ECON [Economics]	20	2.21%
HISTORY	17	1.88%
ECE [Electrical and Computer Engineering]	16	1.77%
COMM [Communication]	15	1.66%
MATSC&EN [Materials Science and Engineering]	15	1.66%
MATH [Mathematics]	14	1.54%
PSYCH [Psychology]	14	1.54%
SOCIOL [Sociology]	14	1.54%
STAT [Statistics]	12	1.32%
ENGR [Engineering]	11	1.21%
FRENCH	11	1.21%
GEOG [Geography]	11	1.21%
ACCTMIS [Accounting and Management Information Systems]	8	0.89%
FD SC&TE [Food Science and Technology]	8	0.89%
CBE [Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering]	7	0.77%
EDU T&L [Education: Teaching and Learning]	7	0.77%
PHARMACY	7	0.77%
COMPSTD [Comparative Studies]	6	0.66%
HISTART [History of Art]	6	0.66%
LINGUIST [Linguistics]	6	0.66%
THEATER	6	0.66%
AED ECON [Agricultural, Environmental and Developmental Economics]	5	0.55%
INT STDS [International Studies]	5	0.55%



Table 6 (continued) Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit

PHYSICS	5	0.55%
SPANISH	5	0.55%
ANATOMY	4	0.44%
BIOMED E [Biomedical Engineering]	4	0.44%
BUS-ADM [Business Administration]	4	0.44%
ES PHE [Education Studies: Philosophy & History of Education]	4	0.44%
EXP [ University Exploration Survey]	4	0.44%
NRSADV [Nursing Advancement]	4	0.44%
POLIT SC [Political Science]	4	0.44%
PUBHHBP [Public Health: Health Behavior & Promotion]	4	0.44%
ANIM SCI [Animal Sciences]	3	0.33%
BUS-MGT [Business Administration: Management Sciences]	3	0.33%
BUS-MHR [Business Administration: Management and Human Resources]	3	0.33%
EEOB [Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology]	3	0.33%
HDFS [Human Development & Family Science]	3	0.33%
SOC WORK [Social Work]	3	0.33%
SPHHRNG [Speech and Hearing Science]	3	0.33%
AFAM&AST [African American& African Studies]	2	0.22%
ARTSSCI [Arts and Sciences]	2	0.22%
AVIATN [Aviation]	2	0.22%
BIOETHC [Bioethics]	2	0.22%
BUS-FIN [Business Administration: Finance]	2	0.22%
ISE [Integrated Systems Engineering]	2	0.22%
MBA [Master of Business Administration]	2	0.22%
NEUROSC [Neuroscience]	2	0.22%
NURSING	2	0.22%
PHILOS [Philosophy]	2	0.22%
PUBHBIO [Public Health: Biostatistics]	2	0.22%
SLAVIC [Slavic Languages & Literatures]	2	0.22%
ASL [American Sign Language]	1	0.11%
COMLDR [Community Leadership]	1	0.11%
CSCFFS [Consumer Sciences: Consumer & Family Financial Services]	1	0.11%
DSABLST [Disability Studies]	1	0.11%

Table 6 (continued) Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit

EDQREM [Educational Studies: Quant. Res. Eval. And Measurement]	1	0.11%
ENTMLGY [Entomology]	1	0.11%
ENVENG [Environmental Engineering]	1	0.11%
ENR [Environment and Natural Resources]	1	0.11%
ESCE [Educational Studies: Counselor Education]	1	0.11%
ESEPSY [Educational Studies: School Psychology]	1	0.11%
GENSTDS [General Studies]	1	0.11%
GERMAN [German]	1	0.11%
HTHRHSC [Health and Rehabilitation Sciences]	1	0.11%
MICRBIO [Microbiology]	1	0.11%
MOLGEN [Molecular Genetics]	1	0.11%
PLNTPTH [Plant Pathology]	1	0.11%
PUBAFRS [Public Affairs]	1	0.11%
RURLSOC [Rural Sociology]	1	0.11%
RUSSIAN	1	0.11%
YIDDISH	1	0.11%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### IV. SUMMARY OF CASES BASED ON STUDENT'S RANK AND COURSE LEVEL

Approximately 67% of the cases resolved by COAM during the 2017-18 reporting year were the result of misconduct allegations in 1000- and 2000-level courses (Table 7). Fewer cases resulted from allegations in progressively higher-level courses. Some cases of academic misconduct occur outside of a formal class taken for academic credit. Those cases are included in the category "Other".

**Table 7**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Distribution of Cases Based on Course Level (Number)**  
**2017-2018 Academic Year**

<b>Course Level (Semesters)</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>% of Cases</b>
1000	400	44.2%
2000	211	23.3%
3000	187	20.6%
4000	47	5.2%
5000	36	4.0%
6000	7	0.8%
7000	13	1.4%
8000	1	0.1%
Other	4	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 8** summarizes the number of cases resolved at each level by student class rank. The distribution of cases for undergraduates is fairly evenly distributed across all ranks. The greatest number of cases and the highest percentage of cases within a single rank was for rank 2 students. The number of cases involving ranks 2, 3 and 4 students was fairly evenly distributed. When cases by rank are expressed as a percentage of total students within each rank based on fifteenth-day student enrollment for Autumn 2017, the distribution of cases was as follows: rank 1=1.79% (10,406 students); rank 2=2.51% (11,900 students), rank 3=1.75% (11,534 students), rank 4=1.24% (18,528 students), and graduate students (excluding graduate professional students)=0.26% (10,708 students). Note: a rank of “Other” usually represents visitors or other individuals who take courses as non-degree students. The four cases in the “other” category were enrolled in a certification program.

**Table 8**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Distribution of Cases Based on Student Rank and Course Level**  
**2017-2018 Academic Year**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>GRD</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>% by Course Level</b>
<b>Course Level</b>								
1000	155	154	57	33	1	0	400	44.2%
2000	29	71	59	52	0	0	211	23.3%
3000	1	20	75	91	0	0	187	20.6%
4000	1	10	7	29	0	0	47	5.2%
5000	0	1	4	24	7	0	33	4.8%
6000	0	0	0	0	7	0	7	0.8%
7000	0	0	0	1	12	0	13	1.4%
8000	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.1%
Other	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	186	256	202	230	28	4	<b>906</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>% by Rank</b>	20.5%	28.3%	22.3%	25.4%	3.1%	0.4%	<b>100.00%</b>	

## V. Summary of Disciplinary and Grade Sanctions

When COAM finds that a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, COAM imposes sanctions. A sanction typically includes a disciplinary component and a grade-related component.

The disciplinary sanctions imposed by COAM and the number of cases involved are summarized in **Table 9**. Of the 906 cases resolved during the 2017-2018 Academic Year, 839 resulted in a finding of "in violation" and these were accompanied by a disciplinary sanction. As these data demonstrate, most students found *in violation of the Code of Student Conduct* received a sanction of "disciplinary probation."

**Table 9**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Summary of Disciplinary Sanctions**  
**2017-2018 Academic Year**

<b>Disciplinary Sanction</b>	<b>Number of Cases "In Violation"</b>	<b>% of Cases</b>
Formal reprimand	53	6.3%
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 term to "until graduation")	730	87.0%
Suspension (range = 1 to 3 terms)	48	5.7%
Dismissal	8	1.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>100%</b>

The grade sanctions imposed by COAM and the numbers of cases involved are summarized in **Table 10**.

Of the 839 cases in which a student was found "in violation" in 2017-18, no grade sanction was authorized in 27 of the cases. As these data demonstrate, the modal grade sanction for

students found “in violation” of the University’s *Code of Student Conduct* is an authorization for a “0” on all or part of the assignment. In most instances, COAM authorizes the instructor to award a grade sanction. In some instances, COAM imposes the sanction of a failing grade directly via the Registrar: “re-enroll with a failing grade” and “E” by action of University Committee. These failing grades may not be removed from the advising report or transcript by petition or retroactive withdrawal from the course. Hearing panels and hearing officers have the option to create grade sanctions appropriate to individual cases of academic misconduct. Grade sanctions created by hearing panels or hearing officers are included in the category “Other”.

**Table 10**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Summary of Grade Sanctions**  
**2017-2018 Academic Year**

<b>Grade Sanction</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>% of Cases</b>
None	23	2.7%
Authorization for a "0" on all or part of the assignment	228	27.2%
Authorization for a reduction in the student's final course grade	78	9.3%
Authorization for “0” on the assignment and a further reduction of the final letter grade in the course	374	44.6%
Authorization for a final grade of "E" or “U” in the course	12	1.4%
Final Grade of E/U/NP by “action of University Committee”	117	13.9%
Re-enroll with a final failing grade for the course	2	0.3%
Other	5	0.6%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>100%</b>

A summary of the disciplinary sanctions received by graduate students who were found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct is given in **Table 11**.

**Table 11**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Summary of Disciplinary Sanctions for Graduate Students**  
**2017-2018 Academic Year**

<b>Disciplinary Sanction</b>	<b>Number of Cases "In Violation"</b>	<b>% of Cases</b>
Formal reprimand	4	14.3%
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 term to "until graduation")	19	67.9%
Suspension (range = 1 to 3 terms)	5	17.8%
Dismissal	0	0.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

A summary of the grade sanctions received by graduate students during the 2017-2018 academic year is provided in **Table 12**.

**Table 12**  
**Committee on Academic Misconduct**  
**Summary of Grade Sanctions for Graduate Students**  
**2017-2011 Academic Year**

<b>Grade Sanction</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>% of Cases</b>
None	1	3.6%
Authorization for a "0" on all or part of the assignment	6	21.4%
Authorization for a reduction in the student's final course grade	3	10.7%

Authorization for "0" on the assignment and a further reduction of the final letter grade in the course	8	28.6%
Authorization for a final grade of "E" or "U" in the course	4	14.3%
Final Grade of E/U/NP by "action of University Committee"	6	21.4%
Re-enroll with a final failing grade for the course	0	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

## VI. Appeals

A student who has been found in violation of the *Code of Student Conduct* has the right to appeal the original decision of the hearing panel or hearing officer. The appeal is not intended to re-hear or re-argue the same case, and is limited to specific grounds as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*. Appeals of decisions of the Committee on Academic Misconduct or its Coordinator are submitted for decision to the Executive Vice President and Provost or designee. Of the 839 cases in which the student was found to be in violation by COAM in 2017-2018, 103 cases were appealed. In 88 instances, the decision of the Committee was upheld. Fifteen of the appeals were granted. In four cases the charges were dismissed. In eight cases the sanctions were adjusted and in three cases the imposition of the disciplinary sanctions was deferred to a later date.